

17 Apr 1961

Bay of Pigs invasion

The Bay of Pigs invasion of April 1961 was an unsuccessful attempt by about 1,500 Cuban exiles, organized and financed by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to topple the revolutionary regime of Fidel Castro in Cuba. In March 1960, President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved a CIA plan to train the exiles for an invasion of Cuba, and by autumn they were receiving military instruction in Guatemala. When John Fitzgerald Kennedy succeeded Eisenhower in January 1961, he allowed the preparations to proceed.

The exiles landed at the Bay of Pigs, on Cuba's southwestern coast, on Apr. 17, 1961. The operation was a disaster. News of the attack had leaked out in advance, and Kennedy had decided not to permit U.S. air support for the invaders. A general uprising, which the CIA had believed would be sparked by the landing, failed to materialize. Castro's forces blocked the exiles from moving inland, and by April 19 they had been crushed. The 1,200 survivors were captured. In December 1962, Castro released the prisoners in exchange for \$53 million worth of U.S. drugs and food.

Bibliography: Higgins, Trumbull, *The Perfect Failure* (1987); Hinckle, W., and Turner, W., *The Fish Is Red: The Story of the Secret War against Castro* (1981); Johnson, Haynes B., *The Bay of Pigs* (1964); Larson, David L., *The Cuban Crisis of 1962*, 2d ed. (1986); Wyden, Peter, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story* (1980).